

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 19884 261531Z

42

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W
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O 261345Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9270

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19884

EXDIS

DEPT PASS SECDEF, JCS, CINCPAC, USSAG.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJ: AIRCRAFT REDEPLOYMENT

REFS: A. STATE 249910 (NOTAL); B. JCS 3890/241803Z DEC.

1. RTG HAS BEEN INFORMED OF DECISION (REFTELS) TO REDEPLOY EB-66 AIRCRAFT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND HAS NO OBJECTION. GEN. KRINAGSAK, SUPREME COMMAND, AGREED TO HOLD INFORMATION UNTIL AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES WITH PRIME MINISTER ON 28 DECEMBER.

2. GEN. KRINAGSAK IMMEDIATELY REQUESTED OUR AGREEMENT TO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF EB-66 REDEPLOYMENT, TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT REGARDING REDUCTION IN AMERICAN MILITARY MANPOWER. HE TIED LATTER POINT TO ERRONEOUS STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF DEFENCE ACM DAWEE AT DECEMBER 24 PRESS CONFERENCE (BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL) THAT US MILITARY FORCES IN THAILAND NOW ABOUT 28,000 WITH CEILING OF A "MAXIMUM OF 33,000 MEN OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT". KRINAGSAK URGED THAT WE AGREE TO SOME STATEMENT WHICH WOULD CLARIFY AND SUPPORT DAWEE, AND PERSUADE THAI PUBLIC THAT GOVERNMENT WAS MAKING PROGRESS IN POTENTIALLY DIFFICULT AREA BEFORE SUBJECT IS RAISED BY STUDENT ACTIVISTS. GEN. MELLEN AND POMIL COUNSELOR ARGUED THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT PRIOR TO ACTUAL MOVEMENT OF AIRCRAFT OR THAT WOULD COMMIT US TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 19884 261531Z

ANY FURTHER REDUCTIONS. HOWEVER, GEN MELLEN ACKNOWLEDGED

THAT LATEST REPORT SHOWED ASSIGNED STRENGTH BELOW 35,000.
GEN. KRIANGSAK AGREED TO DEFER ANY ANNOUNCEMENT UNTIL AFTER
AMBASSADOR'S SCHEDULED CALL ON PRIME MINISTER DEC. 28
AFTERNOON BUT URGED THAT, BECAUSE OF PRIME MINISTER'S LACK
OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE SUBJECT, BASIS FOR DISCUSSION BE
CLOSELY COORDINATED IN ADVANCE.

3. FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION, FOLLOWING DRAFT TEXT
OF STATEMENT TO BE RELEASED BY RTG TAKEN BY BOTH SIDES AD
REFERENDUM.

BEGIN TEXT:

AS A RESULT OF CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE RTG AND USG, THERE HAS BEEN A REDUCTION OF ABOUT 3,700
US MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THAILAND SINCE SEPTEMBER 1973.
THE LATEST REDUCTION INVOLVES THE DEPARTURE OF 24 SUPPORT
AIRCRAFT FROM KORAT RTAF BASE. THESE AIRCRAFT AND PERSONNEL
REDEPLOYMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE WITHOUT REDUCING THE COMBAT
CAPABILITY OF US FORCES STATIONED IN THAILAND FOR THE
SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. CURRENT US MILITARY STRENGTH
IN THAILAND IS ABOUT 35,000. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO
GOVERNMENT'S REPRESENTATIVES WILL CONTINUE IN THE NEW YEAR.

END TEXT.

4. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: I INTEND TO TELL SANYA ON FRIDAY
THAT WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THIS LATEST DEPLOYMENT
BECOMING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THAI SOURCES. I WOULD
ALSO LIKE TO GO ALONG WITH RTG ISSUING STATEMENT ALONG LINES
OF TEXT ABOVE, BECAUSE I AGREE WITH KRIANGSAK'S
ARGUMENT THAT SOME LOW KEY PROGRESS REPORT ON US FORCE
LEVELS AT TURN OF THE YEAR MAY HELP TO DEFUSE AN ISSUE
WHICH CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THAI SOCIETY MAY TRY TO USE
AGAINST RTG AND THE US AS THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION
HEATS UP HERE. ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FORCE LEVEL OF
ABOUT 35,000 WILL IN ADDITION SERVE TO CLARIFY DAWEE'S MIS-
LEADING PRESS STATEMENT THAT CURRENT STRENGTH FIGURE WAS
28,000. IN ANY CASE I BELIEVE THAT HAVING THE PRIME MINISTER
FOCUS ON OUR MILITARY PRESENCE AND OUR CONTINUING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 19884 261531Z

CONSULTATIONS ON FORCE LEVELS WILL SERVE A USEFUL
PURPOSE, BOTH WITHIN RTG AND WITH THAI PUBLIC DURING
MONTHS AHEAD.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED BY
OPENING OF BUSINESS DECEMBER 28, I WILL PROCEED ALONG LINES
OUTLINED ABOVE IN MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER.
KINTNER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDEES.

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